

# Memorial Day

## at the Cambridge American Cemetery

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(Above) The Joint Analysis Center Color Guard from RAF Molesworth posts the colors, while preceding the official party at the ceremony. (Below) Members of the RAF Lakenheath Honor Guard fire off a 21-gun salute prior to the raising of the flag.



Over the years, the United States has sent many of its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond its borders. The only amount of land the United States has ever asked for is enough to bury those that did not return, said U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, at a conference in England in January, in response to a question from the former Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey asking about the 'United States' plans in Iraq. The Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial at Madingley, located about three miles west of Cambridge, is one place where soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines were laid to rest after giving the greatest sacrifice for their country - their lives.

To honor all American servicemembers who died in military service, about 500 people gathered Monday at the 59th Annual Memorial Day service at the cemetery.

The cemetery, which encompasses 30.5 acres of land, was constructed on the site of a temporary cemetery established in 1944 on land donated by the University of Cambridge. When World War II ended, the cemetery was dedicated as the only American cemetery in the British Isles.

"We are proud of this piece of America in our midst,"

said Michael Marshall, Her Majesty's Vice-Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, adding it is a proud resting place of honor, affection and many memories.

The cemetery contains 3,812 headstones, including those of 17 of women and 24 unknown military members. The headstones are represented by Stars of David for those Jewish troops who fell and Latin crosses for all others.

Many people buried at the cemetery were American servicemen and women who served as crewmembers of British-based American aircraft, while others died in the invasions of North Africa and France during World War II.

Behind every grave is a story of loss to families, said Lt. Gen. Arthur Lichte, U.S. Air Forces in Europe vice commander.

Amongst the headstones are two that represent burials of servicemen whose names are known but could not be separately identified. Their remains were buried together and bronze tablets over their graves record their names.

At the cemetery, there is also a 427-foot long wall inscribed with the names of more than 5,000 servicemembers who went missing in action, were lost or buried at sea, or their status is unknown. Four figures - a soldier, airman, sailor and coastguardsman - carved out of English York sandstone by English craftsmen - represent each branch of service, and stand before the wall.

"We are here to remember what they gave, and what they gave up," said Lichte. "What is here is the undying spirit of freedom."

The United States and the United Kingdom again stood shoulder to shoulder in Iraq during the recent war, where more than 100 U.S. servicemen and women gave their lives, Lichte said. They share a kinship with the men and women here.



(Above left) F-15E Strike Eagles from the 494th Fighter Squadron fly in a Missing Man formation over the Memorial Day ceremony. (Above) Gary Kernaghan plays his bag pipes during the ceremony Monday.